

**What is Claimed is:**

1. An image forming apparatus, comprising:
  - an image forming section for copying image data of each page onto copying paper;
  - an after-processing section for conducting finishing processing of the copying paper after the copying, and guiding the copying paper to an outlet portion;
  - an operation section in which an instruction related to image forming is inputted by a user;
  - a controlling section for operating said image forming section and said after-processing section, based on the image forming instruction from said operation section; and
  - a data fetching means for fetching first image data which corresponds to a first sheaf of original paper to be copied and second image data which corresponds to a second sheaf of original paper to be copied,
- wherein: said operation section accepts, as the image forming instruction, a sorting instruction which includes a predetermined number of copies of each of the first image data and second image data and sorting of the copies; and said controlling section, based on the sorting instruction from said operation section, conducts finishing processing of each of a first sheaf of copying paper on which the first image data is copied and a second sheaf of copying paper on which the second image data is copied, and then, executes,

for the predetermined number of copies, an operation of guiding the first sheaf of copying paper and the second sheaf of copying paper, in sequence, to said outlet portion so that the first sheaf of copying paper and the second sheaf of copying paper are piled in this order.

2. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein: said outlet portion is configured by an outlet tray; and said controlling section executes an operation of copying the first image data onto the first sheaf of copying paper, and subsequently, executes an operation of copying the second image data onto the second sheaf of copying paper, and the operations are repeated for the predetermined number of copies.

3. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the finishing processing is stapling processing.

4. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the finishing processing is punching processing.

5. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sorting instruction to be accepted by said operation section includes a sheaf-unit sorting instruction to shift the first sheaf of copying paper from the position of the second sheaf of copying paper.

6. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sorting instruction to be accepted by said operation section includes a sheaf set-unit sorting instruction to shift a first set made up of the first sheaf of copying paper and the second sheaf of copying paper from the position of a second set made up of the first sheaf of copying paper and the second sheaf of copying paper.

7. The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein an instruction to conduct, or not to conduct, the stapling processing of each sheaf of copying paper, is inputted in said operation section.

8. The image forming apparatus according to claim 4, wherein an instruction to conduct, or not to conduct, the punching processing of each sheaf of copying paper, is inputted in said operation section.

9. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

an original-paper placement portion on which original paper to be copied is placed;

a detecting means for detecting original paper being placed on said original-paper placement portion; and

an operation displaying portion for displaying a guidance to guide an operation by a user;

wherein if said detecting means detects none of the first sheaf of original paper on the placement portion after the first sheaf of original paper is placed on said original-paper placement portion, said controlling section controls said operation displaying portion to display a guidance requesting a user if an image reading operation of the second sheaf of original paper is to be conducted or not, and

when an instruction related to image forming operation of the second sheaf is inputted by a user through said operation section, said controlling section controls said data fetching means to fetch the second image data corresponding to the second sheaf of original paper.